

VZCZCXRO5084
OO RUEHBW
DE RUEHAK #0939/01 1361146
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 151146Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6288
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 5592

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000939

SIPDIS

VCI/VIP FOR DAS LOOK, EUR/RPM FOR LAURENDEAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/15/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KCFE](#) [OSCE](#) [RS](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: CFE CONSULTATIONS WITH RUSSIAN DFM KISLYAK

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Carl Siebentritt, Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary: MFA Arms Control Deputy Director General Ahmet Muhtar Gun told us May 14 that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak probed for weaknesses in the Alliance's position on CFE, griped about Alliance "failures" to respond to Russia's concerns, and pressed Turkey to give up the Flank Regime and lift its exclusion zone during May 12 CFE consultations with Turkey. Kislyak warned that Allies will "either have to live with CFE without the Flank Regime, or live with no CFE at all." Gun said Turkey held firm, reiterated the statement made by President Gul at the Bucharest Summit concerning CFE, reaffirmed the March 28 NATO declaration, and pressed Russia to fulfill the Istanbul Commitments and show more flexibility. Looking ahead, Gun said Turkey supports the U.S. approach: listen to the Russians, document non-compliance, and maintain "active patience" until the HLTF retreat this Fall during which the Alliance will review the state of play. Gun concluded by noting that Turkey does not want the CFE dispute to undermine growing trade and commercial ties Russia. End Summary.

12. (C) Gun provided us a readout of Russian Deputy FM Kislyak's May 12 consultations with Turkey that focused on CFE issues, while touching on Black Sea relations and Iran's nuclear program (reported septel). Kislyak's primary GOT interlocutor was MFA Deputy Under Secretary for Bilateral Affairs Ahmet Cevikoz.

Rehashing Familiar Gripes

13. (C) According to Gun, Kislyak raised a series of familiar complaints against the CFE and NATO. Turkey responded firmly to each of the issues, which included:

The Flank Regime:

Kislyak argued that it should be eliminated. Sub-territorial ceilings are unfair and prevent Russia from addressing terrorist threats in the region. He alleged that none of the other Allies care about the Flank Regime and Turkey should not either: Turkey does not border Russia, and Russia does not pose a threat to Turkey. Kislyak warned that ultimately, Allies will have to "live with CFE without the Flank Regime, or live with no CFE at all." Cevikoz told Kislyak that the Flank Regime is part of the CFE Treaty and the Adapted CFE Treaty. Support for the Flank Regime is not a Turkish position, but an Alliance one. Eliminating it does not only impact Turkey and Russia, but will have implications for stability in the Caucasus and the Eastern Aegean. Cevikoz also challenged Kislyak's assertion that the Flank Regime must be eliminated in order for Russia to address its terrorist threat in the North Caucasus, stating that Russia should have sufficient flexibility to address any terrorist threat while still remaining under flank limits. Cevikoz reminded Kislyak that Allies agreed to allow revised limits

to apply temporarily during the Chechnya conflict.

Parallel Action Unfair:

The parallel action proposal is unfair, Kislyak argued. It places many demands on Russia while only providing Alliance promises. Cevikoz replied that the March 28 NATO Statement on CFE spelled out some concrete steps Allies would take in parallel with Russian action. Cevikoz also noted the history of Alliance flexibility in the face of Russian demands (in 1996 and in 1999); Russia should begin to show some flexibility too.

"Substantial Combat Forces":

Kislyak complained that NATO has still not provided a definition of "substantial combat forces" as it is used in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Cevikoz again pointed to the March 28 NATO Statement, noting the statement explicitly offers to develop jointly with Russia a definition for the term.

Istanbul Commitments:

Kislyak asserted that the Alliance continues to make demands on Russia regarding Istanbul Commitments even though Russia has already met them. He specifically protested what he claimed to be a Georgian policy to link the conclusion of the agreement on the Gudauta base with Russian fulfillment of the Istanbul commitments related to Moldova. Cevikoz urged Russia to fulfill all the Istanbul Commitments, which would in turn create the conditions for the ratification of the

ANKARA 00000939 002 OF 002

adapted CFE treaty. Gun reiterated to us Turkey's position that it would support any solution, within or outside of CFE, that Georgia and Moldova are willing to accept.

Exclusion Zone

14. (C) During the consultations, Kislyak also asked Turkey to consider lifting the "exclusion zone," which according to Gun, is the first time Russia has raised the issue with Turkey. Cevikoz responded forcefully, stating that Turkey's need for an exclusion zone is well known: it shares borders with countries that are not part of the CFE treaty and has security challenges in its southeast region.

Next Steps

15. (C) Turkey and Russia agreed to continue consultations in the future, with the Turkish side noting that the March 28 NATO statement provides the best basis for ongoing discussions.

16. (C) Looking ahead, Gun said Turkey supported the US approach and will continue to: hear the Russians out; document Russia's noncompliance; raise CFE concerns in the JCG in Vienna; and maintain "active patience." Gun asked the US to continue to consult with Turkey closely. He stressed that it is in all of the parties' interest to find a solution.

17. (C) Gun concluded his readout to us by stating that Turkey does not desire to let CFE undermine its important bilateral relationship with Russia. Gun noted that bilateral trade volume has reached over 28 billion dollars, and bilateral investment levels have exceeded 6.5 billion dollars.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turkey>

WILSON